

REMARKS

Prior to the filing of this response, claims 37, 51-52, and 67-76 were pending in the application.

In this response, independent claims 37, 71, 74 and 76 are amended to clarify that the primer coating composition is applied directly on a surface of a wood composite material selected from one of hardboard, medium density fiberboard, oriented strand board, particle board or plywood. This amendment is supported in the specification, for example, on page 1, lines 22-29 and page 3, lines 15-17. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the helpful suggestions regarding potentially useful claim amendments.

Claims 72-73 and 75 are amended to properly depend from the amended independent claims.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests further examination of the application and reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the Office Action dated August 6, 2010.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 37, 50-52, and 67-76 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Schedlitzki (DE 2224732; hereafter DE '732) in view of Cummings (U.S. Patent No. 3,529,993; hereafter Cummings), further in view of Helmer et al. (WO 9622338; hereafter Helmer). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection to the extent such rejections may be considered applicable to the claims as amended. The applied references fail to disclose or suggest the inventions defined by Applicant's claims, and provide no teaching that would have suggested the desirability of modification to arrive at the claimed invention.

The DE '732 reference describes a process in which a paper carrier sheet is pre-impregnated with an aminoplast resin.¹ The impregnated carrier sheet is then coated on one or both sides with a mixture of an aminoplast resin and an acrylic resin.² The impregnated and coated sheet is then applied to a wooden plate and this construction is pressed under pressure and

¹ DE '732 translation, page 3, examples.

² *Id.*, at pages 3-4.

heat to form a high gloss synthetic resin surface.³ The resin flows during the molding process to form a closed synthetic resin surface, and the sheet is joined to the wood material.⁴

In contrast, the presently claimed method does not include a paper carrier sheet for transfer of the crosslinkable primer coating composition. Instead, the primer is applied directly onto a surface of a wood composite material selected from one of hardboard, medium density fiberboard, oriented strand board, particle board or plywood. The wood composite material is made of cellulosic materials such as wood fibers, particles, chips and flakes in a resin binder composition. The primer compositions of the present invention are selected to exhibit excellent hold out when applied to the wood composite material (i.e. the compositions do not sink too far into the surface of the wood composite material and remain on top), and the crosslinked matrix rapidly forms a surface suitable for receipt of subsequently applied top coats.

The cited references fail to teach or suggest elimination of the primer carrier sheet. Therefore, the Office Action has not articulated a reason that one of ordinary skill in the art, following a review of DE '732 (or any of the cited references) would eliminate the carrier sheet and select a primer composition for direct application to the compressible mat as presently claimed. In view of DE '732, one of ordinary skill in the art would have no reasonable expectation that application of that aminoplast/acrylic resin directly on the surface of the compressible mat would have provided the proper surface properties (e.g., hold out), in the manufacturing process.

The present claims also require application of a topcoat composition over the primer composition before the construction is heated in a press to form a finished wood composite article. DE '732 (as well as the other cited references) fails to even suggest application of a topcoat over the primed sheet prior to heating and pressing.

In view of the above, the cited DE '732, Cummings and Helmer references, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest at least two important features of the presently claimed process: (1) elimination of the paper carrier sheet and application of a primer composition directly to the surface of the compressible mat; and (2) application of a top coat composition over the primer composition prior to heating and compressing. The elimination of the carrier sheet and reduction of the number of processing, heating and drying steps provides a

³ DE '732 translation, pages 3-4.

⁴ *Id.*, at page 3.

more cost-efficient process for manufacturing composite articles. For these reasons alone, Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are not *prima facie* obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over DE '732 in view of Cummings and Helmer. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All claims in this application are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims.

Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to deposit account number 50-1778.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss this application.

Date: November 8, 2010

By: /H. Sanders Gwin, Jr./

SHUMAKER & SIEFFERT, P.A.
1625 Radio Drive, Suite 300
Woodbury, Minnesota 55125
Telephone: 651.286.8361
Facsimile: 651.735.1102

Name: H. Sanders Gwin, Jr. Reg. No.: 33,242